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American Spaces

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

October 2023

With just over 600 locations, ECA's Office of American Spaces engages people worldwide through programming and resources. American Spaces support U.S. foreign policy goals and strategically promote public diplomacy.

This issue of the American Spaces newsletter brings attention to Cybersecurity month, provides some U.S. flavor about Halloween (no pumpkin spice or candy delivered through in-boxes unfortunately!), highlights one of our talented American Corner directors, and showcases speakers and resources as you create upcoming programming for your particular audiences.

As always, thank you for sending in your comments and suggestions to americanspaces@state.gov. We hope you enjoy this issue!

October is Cybersecurity Month



October is [Cybersecurity Awareness Month](#)! As the United States continues to strengthen its international partnerships on cybersecurity, it is important to consider how vital the internet has become in all facets of life. From critical infrastructure, such as power plants, to online learning during the pandemic, to online access to personal records and accounts such as banking and medical records, online safety is necessary now more than ever and we encourage you to increase your awareness and get involved.

What is Cybersecurity?

Cybersecurity is a vital tool used to ensure we can navigate the digital world with minimal exposure to bad actors online. At its core, it is designed to protect individuals and businesses, including internet systems and applications on mobile devices from being subject to hacking or viruses. Additionally, cybersecurity serves as a measure to protect companies and individuals from data breaches online.

What is the US Government's Role in Cybersecurity?

The United States plays an important role in leading the efforts for cybersecurity in many capacities. A strong cyber world is needed for our national security and to protect systems, such as the national electricity grid, from foreign attacks. In November 2018, the [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#) was established to increase cybersecurity at the federal level and also to provide tools to educate the public on the importance of this issue.

In October 2021, The Department of State also established the [Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy \(CDP\)](#). The focus of this entity is to advance policies that protect the integrity of the infrastructure of the internet for the American public.

How Can I Play a Role in Cybersecurity?

There are many steps you can take to ensure an increased level of cybersecurity, both personally and in the workplace. Measures in the toolkit for successful cybersecurity range from ensuring the selection of strong passwords for logins and being mindful of what is stored in online password managers. Other ideas include enabling multi-step identification on digital accounts, including bank accounts if available. In the workplace, always report any suspicious emails or phishing emails to your organization's technology team. It is also recommended to keep all systems and software up to date and this makes it harder for hackers to access information through firewalls.

How Can I Learn More About Cybersecurity?

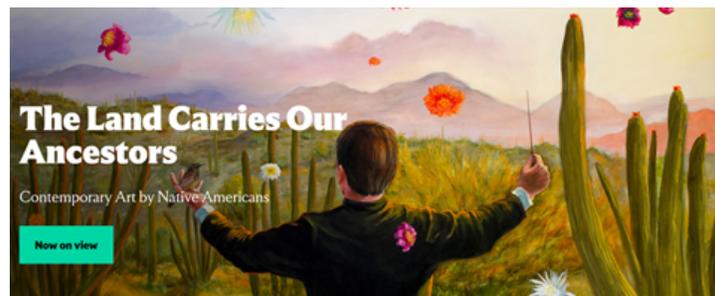
Platforms such as Google's [Interland](#), [Cybersecurity Lab](#), and the [FBI Safe Surfing Games](#) are free of charge and helpful to all ages who want to learn a variety of skills including how to spot hackers, defend themselves from cyber-attacks, and explore how to explore safe internet browsing skills. For guidance on online safety, visit the [National Cyber Security Alliance](#).

The [Office of American Spaces website](#) includes content and guidance to learn more about cybersecurity. Also, remember to follow the U.S. Department of State on social media for information on how to raise awareness on this critical topic throughout October--and all year long.

Spotlight:

Resources to Use!

As you look for new resources to use for programming this fall, please check out these options:



The [National Gallery of Art](#) recently unveiled a new exhibit: [The Land Carries Our Ancestors: Contemporary Art by Native Americans](#). As you consider programming for November's National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month, it has lesson plans, amazing art, and even related videos.



Additionally, the [National Gallery](#) created [Uncovering America](#): an extraordinary collection featuring seven modules, each of which explores works of art that reflect the richness and diversity of the people, places, and cultures of the United States. These modules can be used collectively or individually. [Uncovering America](#) features various historical and cultural references for all ages and learning levels.

The Department of State's [National Museum of American Diplomacy](#) has recently added new curriculum guides and videos to its virtual collection; among the 34 [resources](#) is a new video about [Humanitarian Assistance](#). Consider using these amazing tools in your upcoming programs!



The Office of American Spaces, through its [eLibraryUSA](#) platform and **Kanopy** has a new film to consider using with audiences who wish to develop their professional skills. [The Art of Effective Communications](#) runs just over 30 minutes and includes six lessons.

Reminder!

OASIS Data Deadline:

October 30, 2023!

All Fiscal Year 2023 American Spaces monthly statistics are due by October 30!

The end of the U.S. Government fiscal year on September 30, 2023 also marked the end of the American Spaces statistics reporting period.

All American Spaces should ensure that they have submitted their monthly statistics to their managing Embassy or Consulate for Fiscal Year 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023) no later than October 30 (or earlier if requested by the Embassy or Consulate). These submissions will be final.

Beginning November 1, the Office of American Spaces will include the monthly statistics in reports to stakeholders in the State Department, other agencies, and the U.S. Congress.

Please ensure that your American Space gets credit for all of the good work you do! Thank you to the many American Spaces that have already submitted your Fiscal Year 2023 statistics – we appreciate your diligence!

U.S. Culture: Halloween



Photo: U.S. President John F. Kennedy (in office 1961-1963) with his children in their Halloween costumes.

Halloween in the United States: a Holiday Tradition

Halloween, celebrated on October 31st, is one of the most eagerly anticipated holidays in the United States. It's a day of fun, creative costumes, and a hint of mystery. But how did this occasion become an integral part of American culture?

A Brief History of Halloween:

Halloween's roots can be traced back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, which marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. The Celts believed that on the night of October 31st, the boundary between the living and the dead was blurred, and spirits roamed the Earth. To ward off these wandering souls, people would light bonfires and don costumes.

Fast forward to America's colonial era, where various European traditions melded with Native American beliefs to create a unique tapestry of Halloween customs.

The tradition of dressing up in costumes and going door to door for treats began to take shape in the 1920s.

In recent years, the evolution of Halloween in the United States--especially costumes--has led to engagement around issues of cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and commercialization. Debates about cultural appropriation urge individuals to consider the impact of their costume choices, emphasizing respect for diverse cultures.

The call for inclusivity encourages events and treats accessible to all, regardless of their unique needs. Simultaneously, concerns about the commercialization of Halloween challenge the holiday's essence, with a push toward simpler, community-oriented celebrations. These discussions aim to strike a balance between tradition and sensitivity, shaping Halloween to better reflect the evolving values of a diverse society.

The Art of Halloween Costumes:

One of the most exciting aspects of Halloween in the United States is the art of costume-making. Each year, people of all ages unleash their creativity and transform into various characters or personas. From classic monsters like vampires and witches to pop culture icons, the possibilities are seemingly limitless.

Children often choose their favorite superheroes or cartoon characters, while adults frequently delve into more elaborate and imaginative ensembles. Creative DIY (Do It Yourself) costumes have become increasingly popular, inspiring individuals to craft their outfits with meticulous detail. The quest for the perfect costume leads to a surge in craft stores and costume shops offering a vast array of options.

In addition to dressing up, communities across the United States host costume contests, parades, and haunted house experiences, further fueling the Halloween spirit. Children often receive candy by going door to door in neighborhoods (trick or treating) or the increasingly common trunk or treat event--where car trunks are decorated with themes and candy is distributed.

Halloween is a time when self-expression and creativity take center stage, allowing everyone to become someone or something entirely different for a night--and share the joy of community and of course, candy!

As Halloween approaches, you would find American neighborhoods adorned with spooky decorations, carved pumpkins, and the laughter of trick-or-treaters in costumes ranging from cute to spine-chilling.

Halloween in the United States is more than just a holiday; it's a celebration of creativity and the vibrant diversity of U.S. culture. The art of Halloween costumes and the rich history that brought us to this point make it a day that both children and adults eagerly anticipate. So, don your costume, embrace the spooky atmosphere, and enjoy the fun and festive spirit of Halloween in the USA.

Did you know?

International Observe the Moon Night



Saturday, October 21, 2023 is International Observe the Moon Night.

Join the worldwide celebration of the Moon! This is an opportunity for American Spaces to highlight lunar science and exploration, to celebrate Moon-inspired artwork, or to learn how the Moon is woven into different aspects of our daily lives (e.g., tides, seasons). Last year, over one million people participated in 125 countries across all 7 continents. Learn more about it on the American Spaces website feature: [Observe the Moon Night](#) or the NASA [video trailer](#)!

Faces of American Spaces:

Adama Kouyate



In early July, **Adama Kouyate**, Director of the [American Center Bamako](#) visited the Office of American Spaces while attending training at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI).

We were happy to welcome him and asked him a few questions about his American Center, his career, and his hopes for what his Spaces can accomplish.

Enjoy learning from Adama—and if your travels bring you to training in DC, please let us know—so we can welcome you, too!

Question: *Last fall you participated in PY 351 in Vienna, could you share with our readers some things that you brought back from PY 351 that you were able to use in your American Space?*

Answer: Having to manage many American Spaces at the same time, this is new to me. So thanks to this training in Vienna, I was able to discuss with some of my colleagues about how and what they do to manage their centers. Something I learned which was very interesting and that I've implemented in Mali is to have weekly calls with all these spaces: to direct them and also have information from them about the challenges and try to help them. So this is something I really appreciated and that's also helping me accomplish my work.

Question: *We have so many new American Space coordinators, what words of wisdom would you share with them?*

Answer: I would tell them to use the Office of American Spaces website, because this website has a lot of resources. And it makes your life so much easier that you cannot even imagine. So I will recommend them to really try to understand this website-what is in there and also use them for your work.

Question: *Adama, you have been in your role for three years, what would be your big goal for your center in three more years?*

Answer: Mali is a very big country and youth from different regions don't have access to information about the United States, so I would like to have more American shelves and also maybe more official American Spaces, so that the U.S. can also reach out to those people in remote areas. Also, I think in the future we need to think more about ways to expand our accessibility so that more people with special needs may participate in our programs.

Question: *Is there anything else you'd like to share with the newsletter readers?*

Answer: Yes, I would like to thank all the American Spaces office staff for their support. Because anytime we need to know something or any time we need something or we have a

challenge, you can reach out to a person and you have instant help, so this is very encouraging.

U.S. Speaker Spot

As a partnership with the [Office of the U.S. Speaker Program](#), the American Spaces Newsletter is featuring selected speakers available for virtual programs with professional audiences on priority themes. For more information about the U.S. Speaker Program, and to submit a program request, please reach out to your local Public Diplomacy Section.

The following speakers are featured for November programming:



For [National Entrepreneurship Month](#), schedule [Lynne McAuliffe](#). She is the dean of business, technical, health, and safety programs at Central Wyoming College. She also launched the Start-Up Institute, which provides training on entrepreneurship skills, and designed a Native American artists entrepreneurship program for local tribes in Wyoming. Currently, McAuliffe is creating an innovation center for entrepreneurs.



Schedule Patricia for [International Education Week!](#) [Patricia Lozano](#) is the executive director of Early Edge California, an early learning policy and advocacy nonprofit organization. Lozano works throughout California to improve childcare quality and provide research to teachers working with second language learners. Previously, Lozano was a senior program

officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation working on their national early learning strategy and a former educator. Lozano participated in an ECA traveling program with Colombia in September 2023. Lozano is fluent in Spanish.

Check out more [potential speakers on the American Spaces website!](#)

Calendar of Events

As always, the full calendar is available on the American Spaces [website](#).

October: [Cybersecurity Month](#), [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)

October 1: [International Day of Older Persons](#)

October 2: [Child Health Day](#)

October 4 - 10: [World Space Week](#)

October 9: Columbus Day (United States Federal holiday also known as Indigenous Peoples' Day)

October 11: [International Day of the Girl Child](#)

October 16: [World Food Day](#)

October 17: [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#)

October 24: [United Nations Day](#)

October 25: [National Art Day](#)

October 27: [International Religious Freedom Day](#)

October 29: [International Internet Day](#)

October 31: Halloween

November: [National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month](#),

November 3: [Sandwich Day](#)

November 6: [International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict](#)

November 9: [World Freedom Day](#), [Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall](#), [Go to a Museum Day](#)

November 11: [Veterans Day](#)

November 13 - 19: [National Entrepreneurship Week](#)

November 13 - 17: [International Education Week](#) and [Toolkit](#)

November 15: [Locally Employed Staff Recognition Day](#)

November 16: [International Day for Tolerance](#) and [Democracy and Human Rights Resources](#)

November 19: [Women's Entrepreneurship Day](#) and [Global Entrepreneurship Week \(GEW\) \(19-25\)](#)

November 20: [World Children's Day](#)

November 23: [Eat a Cranberry Day](#) and [Thanksgiving Day](#)

November 25: [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#)

December:

December 1: [World AIDS Day](#) and [Toolkit](#)

December 2: [International Day for the Abolition of Slavery](#)

December 3: [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) and [toolkit](#)

December 4 - December 10: [Computer Science Education Week](#)

December 5: [International Volunteer Day](#)

December 7 - December 15: Hanukkah (see [Jewish American Heritage Month Toolkit](#))

December 7: [Letter Writing Day](#)

December 9: [International Anti-corruption Day](#)

December 18: [International Migrants Day](#)

December 20: [International Human Solidarity Day](#)

December 25: Christmas Day

December 26 - January 1: Kwanzaa

Thanks to all of you who have shared your programming ideas and highlights with your colleagues through our American Spaces FB page. You can continue to share your news and information by emailing us at AmericanSpaces@state.gov. If you have any questions or content to add, email [Karlene Noel Jennings](mailto:Karlene.Noel.Jennings).

To add someone to this newsletter, email us at AmericanSpaces@state.gov.

Engage & Grow (Social Media Playbook)

October 2023 ECA Theme: The Power of Partnership

- **Cybersecurity Hashtags**
 - **Cybersecurity:** #CyberSecurity #ProtectYourData #DigitalDefense
 - **Critical Infrastructure:** #CriticalInfrastructure #Resilience
 - **Security Market Forces:** #SecurityMarketForces #ResilientFuture
 - **Invest In Resilience:** #InvestInResilience #FutureReady
 - **International Partnerships:** #InternationalPartnerships #SharedGoals
- **Breast Cancer Awareness Month:** #BreastCancerAwarenessMonth
- **October 31 - Halloween:** #Halloween

November 2023 ECA Theme: #StudyWithUS

- **November** – Native American Heritage Month – #NativeAmericanHeritageMonth
- **November 11** – Veterans Day – #VeteransDay
- **November 24** – Thanksgiving Day – #ThanksgivingDay

Please find additional hashtags in Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Ukrainian, and Russian [here](#).

Finally, we have recently introduced digital assets for social media managers to use for our most common observances. We currently have images formatted for Facebook and Instagram for upcoming themes and you can customize the assets to fit your local community's needs. The assets are currently available from the [albums in the American Spaces Facebook group](#).

For advice about current Department of State social media posture or specific situations, please consult your REPS and/or your local Public Diplomacy Section.



American Spaces

Want to learn about more events in your area or causes you care about? Tell us about yourself and your interests here:

[Update My Preferences](#)

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